

FIRST 50 DAYS

A Toolkit
by Quarter Zero
and verynice



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TOOLKIT LEGEND



PRACTICE EXERCISE

Try it out.

Mini tips/lessons/theory inspired by the Quarter Zero First 50 Days Handbook. Should take 5-10 minutes to read and comprehend.



TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

Follow along.

Quick activities relevant to the week's theme, inspired by verynice's toolkits and the Quarter Zero First 50 Days handbook. Activities should take 20-30 minutes.



REFLECTION

Reflect and journal.

Prompts to inspire creativity and fresh perspectives along the way as well as personal reflection. These prompts can also be rapid activities that take 5-10 minutes.



COMPREHENSION

Quiz yourself.

Quizzes to challenge comprehension and ability to recall key terms and methods discussed during the week.

GLOSSARY

PROBLEM

The issue, observation, or experience you are trying to improve or change.

IDEA

The general concept for your solution. The idea is not yet a specific product or business, but the bigger picture vision.

PROJECT

The plan of action you will take to achieve your idea. A project would include your product and business.

PRODUCT

The physical manifestation of how your idea will come to life. This is a noun—some object, service, or offering—that can exist in reality.

BUSINESS

The strategy for how your product will be shared with the masses, and generate income so the idea can sustain itself and grow. In this toolkit, think of the business as a combination of your problem statement, your value proposition, your MVP, and your positioning.

MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT (MVP), PROTOTYPE

The quickest version of your product or business that you can make.

01

DESIGN



PHASE 01: DESIGN



DAY 01: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

YOUR STARTING POINT!

Being an entrepreneur usually means you are making something out of nothing. It's like walking a path full of surprises. You might have a vision of what your destination looks like, but you may not know how to get there exactly. All you can do is keep that vision in mind, pick a good starting point, and prepare to run into surprises!

Before you start walking, think about why you're curious about being an entrepreneur in the first place. Why do you even want to start walking? Imagine potential destinations. What kind of surprises on your path are you most prepared for? Where's the best place for you to start your journey?

- *What topics do you care about most?*
- *What areas of knowledge/skills are you an expert in?*
- *What roles do you find yourself playing most and least often when you work, both alone and with other people?*
- *What kind of work could you do all day and not feel like any time has passed?*
- *What makes a task enjoyable for you?*



DAY 02: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

CALL IT WHAT IT IS... NOT!

Now that you've reflected on your starting point, it's important to exercise new ways to design ideas. This way, you're more prepared to respond to any surprises on your journey ahead.

There are a lot of ways to come up with ideas, but the two most popular ones are re-framing and forced association. Re-framing is when you pick up an everyday object or set of objects, and imagine what they would be like if they were used for something they aren't intended for. For example, "what if this vase was a hat?" or "what if this cardboard box was a spaceship?"

 **Draw a picture.** Find an object in your home, and attempt to re-frame it. What might this look like? How might it work? Draw three different scenarios for the object.

Forced association is when you take two different ideas, objects, or situations, and you combine them into one story. For example, in front of you there is a pen and a phone. What kind of invention could you make, inspired by the combination of these two things? Well... introducing, the PEN-PHONE! It's a PEN that is also a PHONE!

 **Draw a picture.** Pick two random objects in your home. Imagine that they are combined to become a new invention. What might this look like? How might it work? Draw three different object combinations.

It can be hard sometimes to come up with ideas, because we tend to worry that all of our ideas have to be perfect or interesting. The truth is, it's great to come up with "bad" or unfinished ideas, too! When you challenge your mind to connect the dots on something, you start kicking it into a new creative gear that can eventually lead you to the next big thing.



DAY 03: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

THE WARM-UP DESIGN SPRINT.

To prepare you for the entrepreneurial mindset, let's go through our first design sprint. Your task is to do each of the following activities:

- ✏️ **Design the best backpack.** Show us the interior and exterior of the backpack. Do this using any medium or materials you would like.
- ✏️ **Draw a series of 20 circles on a single sheet of paper.** Turn each circle into something unique. Do this using a pen.



DAY 04: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

WALK FROM OUTER SPACE.

Go for a walk in your neighborhood. As you walk, pretend you are a new visitor to the planet, an alien from another galaxy. Take a look around. What are all of the things in this environment that stand out? How are all the things you see—plants, cars, houses, other people—designed to work together? What is particularly interesting? Innovative? Kind of strange?



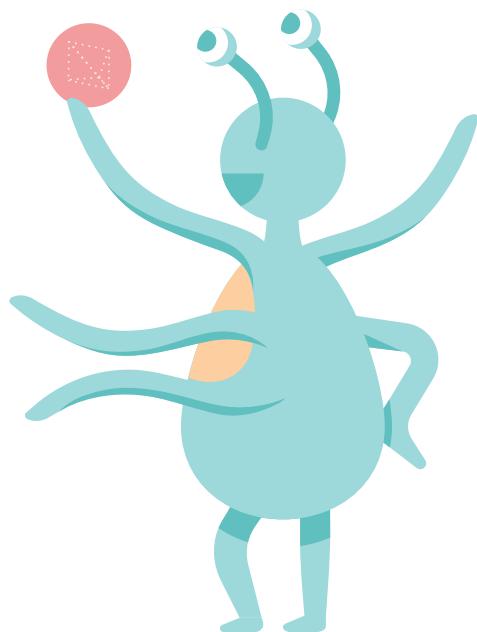
DAY 05: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

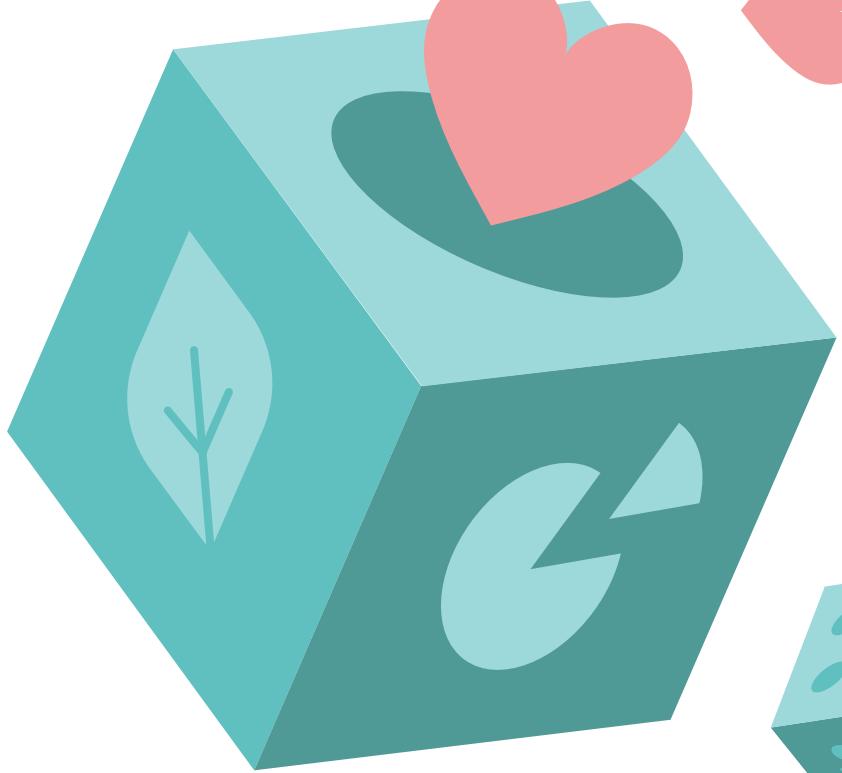
WHAT MAKES YOUR JOURNEY UNIQUE?

As you embark on your path, keep in mind all qualities that make you unique. Your future product will be something that couldn't be made without you—you are the powerful person that will be giving the idea your own special style.

- *What are some personal values you believe you embody?*
- *What are some qualities that others have praised in you?*
- *Which qualities about your environment at school or work are important to you?*
- *What feelings, obstacles, or circumstances do you feel like you struggle with?*



02 PROBLEM



PHASE 02: PROBLEM



DAY 06: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Think about three problems that you've run into, have observed, or care about solving. These can be from situations in your life, tasks you have to do regularly, or issues you notice about the people and world around you. Reflect on these problems by journaling about the following questions for each one:

- *Why does this problem bother you?*
- *When did this problem first start bothering you?*
- *How do you deal with this problem?*
- *In a perfect world, how would you deal with this problem?*
- *Does this problem bother other people, too?*



DAY 07: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

WHAT CAN WE BUILD?

Now that you've taken some time to reflect on a few problems you care about, you will dive even deeper into your passions and practice turning what you care about into ideas for possible businesses. This activity is inspired by the [Models of Impact](#) toolkit by verynice.

To begin, make a list of 6 things that you are passionate about. These can be anything! They can be serious things, like a social issue, or things that feel normal, like your interests and hobbies. Feel free to review any of your journal entries to get ideas, including the list of problems you reflected on yesterday.

- Thing 01.
- Thing 02.
- Thing 03.
- Thing 04.
- Thing 05.
- Thing 06.

Next, make a list of 6 skills that you have. These can be skills you learned in school, at work, or on your own. They should be different than the things you listed before.

- Skill 01.
- Skill 02.
- Skill 03.
- Skill 04.
- Skill 05.
- Skill 06.

Finally, pick 6 of the following Impact and Revenue Models that are most interesting to you. An Impact Model is a sustainable way to make impact in the world (for example, achieve your mission, help the environment, or give back to others). A Revenue Model is a sustainable way to make income to support your business and its efforts.

- **B2B (Business to Business):**

A general model of business in which all transactions and product/services are designed to be made directly from one business to another business.

- **B2C (Business to Consumer):**

A general model of business in which all transactions and product/services are designed to be made directly from a business to a consumer.

- **eCommerce:** Originally short for “electronic commerce”, eCommerce is a revenue model leveraged for the sale of digital or physical products in which the transaction and customer information are being transferred over the Internet.

- **Hourly Rate:** A structure for paying for a service provider’s work. Typically when someone is working on an hourly rate, it is for a small job, or for maintenance, and an estimate of hours is provided prior to commencement.

- **Membership/Subscription:** The membership/subscription model allows an exclusive community of members and/or subscribers to earn access to recurring goods and/or services and/or access. Membership is often in reference to a physical community space whereas Subscription is often in reference to a regularly delivered set of physical products or digital products/content. For businesses, Membership/Subscription ensures recurring revenue and/or recurring engagement. Most commonly, there are multiple “tiers” that create a community which are defined by the amount of access each member/subscriber is granted as well as the amount of money they pay on a recurring basis.

- **Sponsorship:** An agreement between two organizations/businesses in which one of the organizations/businesses will sponsor/support the other via the donation of necessary good/services/cash in exchange for public recognition.

- **Access to Education:** Products/services/initiatives/programs with the specific purpose to make education and personal development more accessible and enjoyable for their end users.

- **Conditional Discounts:** A model that rewards customers at an online or brick and mortar establishment for good behavior/acts of kindness or heroism in order to incentive social impact

- **Conscious Sourcing:** Products that are manufactured/developed from materials that are consciously sourced in order to protect rare/endangered materials/environments and animals.

- **Jobs for the Disabled:** Products and/or services that are manufactured/offered in a manner that allows the business to employ a workforce that is faced with medical/health issues.

- **One for One:** A model that allows customers to purchase a product that additionally sponsors a product of equal or lesser value to be sent to individuals/communities/organizations in need.

- **Pro-Bono Publico:** Literally means “for the good of the public”. A type of philanthropy in which businesses provide their time and knowledge at no cost to the beneficiary. Originally found in the legal industry in the late 1800s, pro-bono has grown to engage a diverse range of disciplines/industries in the service-oriented business space in in-kind philanthropy.



ROUND 01: Now that you have three lists of six items, grab a six-sided die. Roll the die three times so that you select one item from each list. Think about a new idea for a business, product, or service that combines those three items.

ROUND 02: Do this again, but this time, roll the die twice. This means you will be working with a total of six different items to come up with an idea!

Now that you’ve generated two different unique ideas, take time to reflect on them. Is this a unique idea? Are you excited about it? Does it solve a real problem?



DAY 08: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY FOLLOW ALONG.

WRITING THE PROBLEM STATEMENT.

Based on the possible businesses you generated yesterday, pick one idea to move forward with.

Share your idea with three people. Ask them about the kind of people they think might be most interested in it, along with the pain points or problems this might solve for those people.

After you've conducted your interviews, determine the top audience you are trying to reach with your idea. It's okay if it's just a hunch for now.

User:

Next, identify the key pain point or problem this idea is solving for that user, along with the activity or action they are trying to complete in the context of that problem.

Action/Activity:

Pain Point:

Next, plug in these three things into the Problem Statement template below.

- A [user] needs to [action/activity], but [pain point].

For example, let's say you came up with an idea for an app that helps people who are new to a school get connected to like minded people and make friends. Your problem statement might look like this:

A high school student needs to find a place to sit at lunch, but they are new to school and don't know who to sit with.

Now that we have a problem statement, we can test the problem statement next week in our Customer phase to see if it captures a valid pain point.



DAY 09: PRACTICE EXERCISE TRY IT OUT.

THE 5 WHYS

When you're trying to get to the root of a problem, it's important to keep asking "why?". Sakichi Toyoda, the founder of Toyota Industries developed a technique called the "5 Whys" in the 1930s as a way to help his team solve problems in a more effective way. If you ask "why?" five times, you can get to the root of a problem faster. Let's try it!

- How are you feeling right now?

WHY?	WHY?	WHY?
WHY?	WHY?	WHY?



DAY 10: COMPREHENSION

QUIZ YOURSELF.

DOES IT ALL MAKE SENSE?

Pick up an everyday object, like a vase, and imagine it was used as something completely different, like a measuring cup. What is this kind of design exercise called?

- *Problem ideation*
- *Forced association*
- *Reframing*
- *Design sprint*

Donations, digital downloads, event tickets, freemium and in-app purchases are all types of what?

- *Business models*
- *Revenue models*
- *Marketing strategies*
- *Problem statements*

What must be included in a problem statement?

- *A user, an action/activity and a pain point*
- *A user, a pain point and a solution*
- *An action/activity, a pain point and a solution*
- *A user, a buyer, and a pain point*

What is the point of the “5 Whys”?

- *To identify a problem faster*
- *To develop a solution faster*
- *To get to the root of a problem faster*
- *To connect with more potential customers*

03

CUSTOMER



PHASE 03: CUSTOMER



DAY 11: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

WHAT KIND OF CUSTOMER ARE YOU?

Knowing your own profile as a customer will help you develop the profiles of your potential customers.

Think about the last three products you bought at the store. For each product, go online and do some research about that product and their business.

- Who is this primary customer of this product?
- Do you fit within that category?
- What other brands share a similar primary customer group?
Have you also used those products before?



DAY 12: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

WHO ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Take your problem statement that you crafted last week on Day 08. This is the hypothesis we will be testing this week as we create our profiles and conduct our interviews.

Today's activity is inspired by the [Give All toolkit series](#) by verynice. Start by listing as many people as possible that might be interested in the idea you generated on Day 08. These can be actual people that you know, or even just types of people (roles like driver or flight attendant). Be thorough, and capture as many people as you possibly can. More is more!

Once you've written down a bunch of these, take note of which of these people might be of most interest for you to focus on. Review your work, and try to determine the top 3 people that your project will serve. Next, create a profile for each of these 3 users with the following template:

NAME:

What's their name?

AGE:

How old are they?

LOCATION:

Where do they live or work?

OCCUPATION/ROLE:

What do they do?

PURPOSE:

How do they relate to the problem you're solving? What pain points is your idea helping this user address?

Taking a minute or two to draw a quick sketch of your user can be fun and useful... trust us!



DAY 13: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

HOW DO YOU RELATE TO YOUR CUSTOMER?

After identifying your problem statement, you should think about how you relate to the customer you are trying to serve. Journal about the following questions:

- *In general, which demographic groups do you find yourself talking with most often? Least often?*
- *Think about the age, setting, background of your potential customer. Where does your potential customer fall compared to these groups?*
- *Think about the most fulfilling conversation you've had recently. Who was it with? What made it so special?*
- *How can you have similarly fulfilling conversations with your potential customers?*



DAY 14: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

OKAY, NOW WHO ACTUALLY ARE YOUR CUSTOMERS?

Over the last few days, you've thought about who your customers might be and how you can relate to them. Now, the best way to understand your customer and test your problem statement is to actually take the time to talk to them!

Interview 5-7 people that match the profiles of your customer. Why 5-7? Well, after 5 interviews, you start to see significant patterns in terms of responses. Review these tips before interviewing:

- *Prepare questions about your problem statement, but don't be afraid to improvise. Let the conversation feel natural instead of like you are reading off of a list.*
- *That said, make sure to set a clear goal and objective of your interview before you start so that you get what you need.*
- *When you ask questions, work hard to not lead the subject. For example, instead of "do you like Mario Kart?", ask "do you play video games?".*
- *If possible, bring someone with you to help take notes.*
- *Remember to always ask permission before recording a conversation.*

After your interviews, revisit your problem statement. Is it still true? Make edits to your problem statement. This is what you will move forward with for your business. Now that you have an official problem statement, you can be even more focused when doing research in the future. In addition, the problem statement can help you stay focused if you accidentally get distracted by other ideas!



DAY 15: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

KEEPING AN OPEN MIND.

Sometimes when we think of a new idea for a business or product, we can accidentally make something that is designed only for people just like us. It's cool to solve a problem that you are personally facing, but by not making something that can also help others, we are not being very inclusive. We might miss a key market opportunity -- and an opportunity to positively impact our community.

For each of your customer profiles, reflect and respond in your journal to the following questions:

- *Am I being inclusive enough?*
- *Who might I have left out while thinking about the problem statement?*

04 VALUE PROPOSITION



PHASE 04: VALUE PROPOSITION



DAY 16: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

WHY IS THIS VALUABLE TO YOU?

Remember our metaphor from the beginning about how being an entrepreneur is like walking a path full of surprises? Now that we have an early idea of what our destination looks like—and maybe even have talked to some people along the way—let's revisit why we're still walking this journey. Reflect and journal about the following questions:

- *How does the problem statement relate to you?*
- *How do you relate to the potential customers you spoke to?*
- *What excites you most about the problem statement you're addressing?*
- *What about the scope or vision might make you nervous?*



DAY 17: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

BRAND NEW EYES.

Think of a brand that you and your friends really trust. First, ask yourself: What are the top 3 things that you like about this brand? Next, ask a friend the same question. Be careful not to share your own answers! Next, ask another friend the same question. Again, be careful not to share your answers! Finally, compare all 9 of these things that you and your 2 friends have said.

- *What stands out?*
- *Are there similarities? Differences?*
- *What does that tell you about the value that you and your friends perceive that brand to have?*



DAY 18: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

WHY IS THIS VALUABLE?

Today we will be learning how to design the value proposition for your idea. A 'value proposition' is a fancy name for what any organization has to offer everyone who's involved, from customers, to resource providers, investors, team members, etc. A value proposition gets to the heart of why people would choose your product over another (values) while also taking the time to understand what they are looking for (value). This activity is inspired by the [Give All toolkit series](#) by verynice.

Let's take some time to declare to your customers what is valuable about your potential product. A value proposition is more than an inspiring statement. It communicates the actual offering you are delivering. It's often the underlying system that motivates all of your business decisions. The following template will help you define your value proposition. As you answer these, think back to the problem statement you created as well as the key people your idea is trying to focus on.

PROMPT 01:

Who is our key customer?
What is their greatest need?

RESPONSE:

[YOUR IDEA] helps achieve
their greatest need, which is

PROMPT 02:

What does your customer currently have
to do to solve this problem? What does
your idea allow them to do instead?

RESPONSE:

Right now, our customer has to
With [YOUR IDEA], they are able
to instead!

PROMPT 03:

How does your idea make
your customer feel?

RESPONSE:

[YOUR IDEA] makes our
customers feel !



DAY 19: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

STRENGTHENING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION.

Consider the following. Take your value proposition from yesterday and revise it based on the following tips:

1. When developing your value proposition, work with your potential customers—perhaps the ones you have already interviewed—to get an understanding of how you are being perceived, and see how accurate that is to your problem statement and value proposition. If you are starting something from scratch, and do not have an audience to get feedback from, you can also have conversations with previous coworkers or employers about your work in general.
2. A common mistake in value proposition design is to spend too much time thinking about your competition, as well as all of the cool features and benefits of your organization. Don't get tunnel vision! Instead, think about your customers. What do they need? How are those needs currently being fulfilled by your competitors? How do you fulfill those needs in a better way? Take the time to understand how the problem that you are solving fits into the ecosystem of their other needs (which may be fulfilled by others!).
3. It will be impossible to appease every pain point of your users in their day-to-day lives. Stay true to what you know you can deliver well, and rank the identified pain points informed by this reality.



DAY 20: COMPREHENSION

QUIZ YOURSELF.

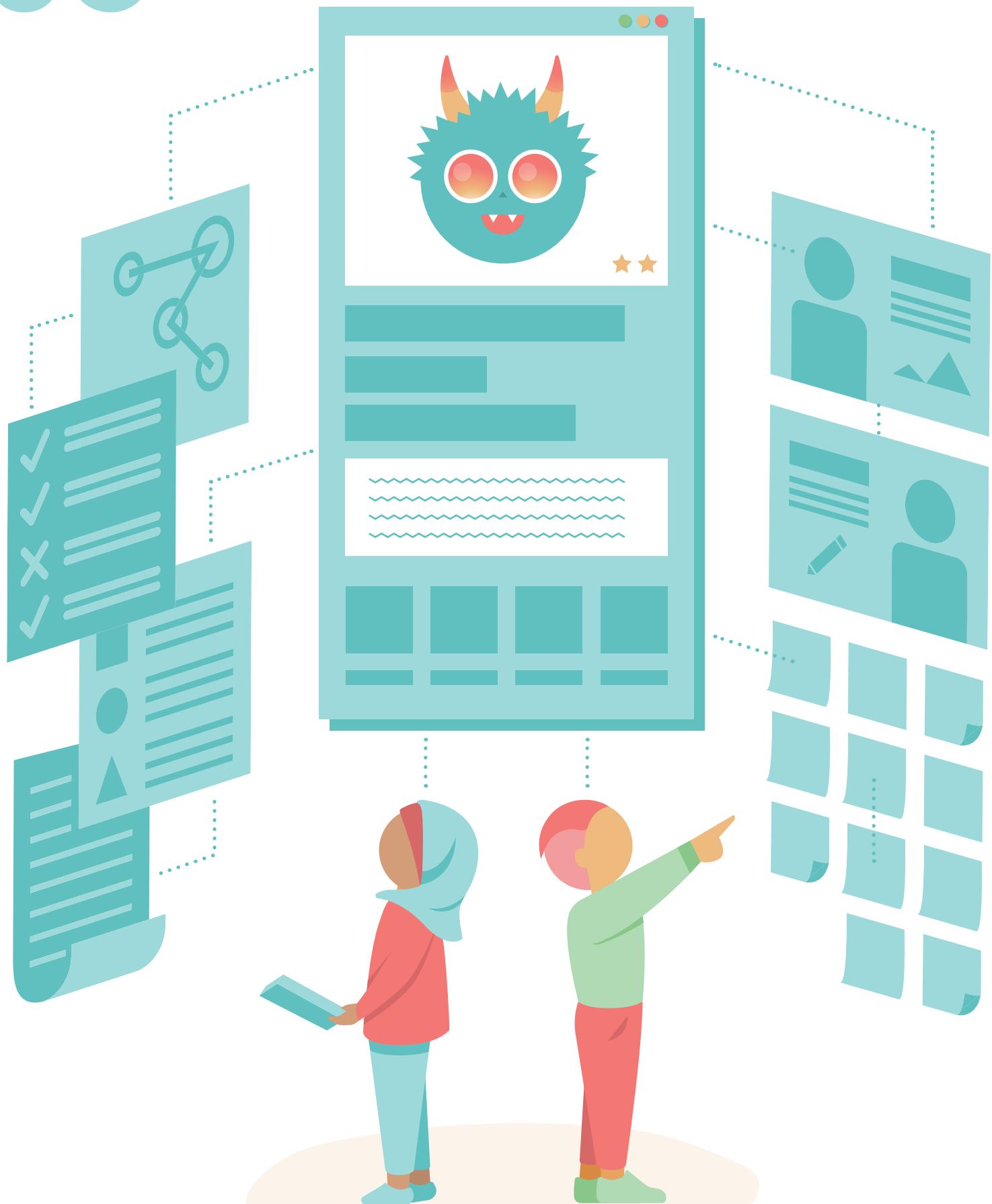
DOES IT ALL MAKE SENSE?

1. Which of the following should you know about potential customers?
 - *Where they live*
 - *How old they are*
 - *How they experience the problem*
 - *All of the above*
2. Which of the following is key to an effective interview?
 - *Prepare a list of questions and stick to it*
 - *Start the interview without a clear goal and let it develop naturally*
 - *Work hard not to lead the subject*
 - *Always record, even if you have to do it covertly*
3. What is a “Value Proposition”?
 - *A proposed price for a good or service*
 - *What an organization has to offer*
 - *A type of design challenge*
 - *How a firm expects to earn revenue*
4. What is one of the ways founders develop “tunnel vision”?
 - *Thinking too much about their product's cool features*
 - *Thinking too much about their customers*
 - *Thinking too much about how the problem affects customers*
 - *Thinking too much about how to meet customers' needs*



05

INNOVATION



PHASE 05: INNOVATION



DAY 21: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

WHAT DOES “INNOVATION” MEAN TO YOU?

“Innovation” is often a word that’s thrown around in business. As an entrepreneur, it’s important to define what it means for yourself. Reflect and journal about the following questions.

- *What words do you think of when you think of “innovation”?*
- *What products or brands come to mind when you hear the word “innovation”?*
- *Why? What is it that makes those products or brands innovative?*



DAY 22: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

RAPIDLY PROTOTYPING YOUR MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT.

Today, we’ll be turning your idea from something that just exists in your head into a real version of your product. This is called the Minimum Viable Product, or MVP.

This process is called rapid prototyping. The rapid prototype will be your MVP. You will use simple materials (like paper and pen) to make the idea you have in your head more tangible. Rapid prototypes are really useful because they don’t typically require a lot of money or time to make. Rapid prototypes are also useful because they can help you better describe the idea you have in your head.

For today’s exercise, you will need different materials depending on whether or not your project is a digital product, a physical product, or service/experience. Depending on what your project is, check out the instructions below.

Digital Product:

A digital product, like an app or a website, can be prototyped using pen and paper. Follow these steps to create your rapid prototype:

- *Make a list of all of the key features of your digital product.*
- *Next, put these features in the order in which the customer or user will experience them.*
- *Next, group these features by the specific screens they will be experienced in. For example, someone might “log-in” or “sign-up” on the same page. They also might “view cart” and “checkout” on the same page.*
- *Finally, draw a rough picture for each of these screens. Do this until you have every screen of your website or app created!*

Physical Product:

A physical product, like a toy or a device, can be prototyped using pen and paper or Play-Doh. Follow these steps to create your rapid prototype:

- *Make a list of all of the key features of your physical product.*
- *For each of these key features, make a quick drawing of what that might look like in a physical form.*
- *Once you’ve drawn all of the key features, cut them out and see how you can assemble them together - like puzzle pieces!*
- *After you’ve completed this, either make a new drawing that shows it all together, or get some Play-Doh and make a quick model.*

Service/Experience:

A service sometimes includes a digital or physical product. Sometimes it is more about an experience that is being provided to a client or customer. If that’s what you’re working on, follow these steps to create your rapid prototype:

- *Make a list of each step of the service or experience.*
- *Next, put these steps in the order in which the customer or user will experience them.*
- *Finally, draw a flow chart that maps out the whole customer journey. Be sure to include some descriptions or annotations so that people know what you mean!*



DAY 23: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

CRITIQUING YOUR MVP.

Remember the prototype you made yesterday? Put that on a table or desk in front of you. Spend a couple of minutes looking at it. Don't be afraid to pick it up and examine the details.

- *What is your favorite thing about this prototype?*
 - *What can you do to make that thing even more evident to everyone?*
- *What is your least favorite thing about this prototype?*
 - *What can you do to your prototype to make that thing better?*

Take a few minutes and develop a new sketch or rough prototype based on your answers to these questions.



DAY 24: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

FIRST OUTSIDE IMPRESSIONS.

Don't forget how important it is to show your MVP to others! It can be scary sharing an idea before it is nice and polished looking, but it is super important to remain open to feedback.

In the Validation Phase, we'll learn how to do this more formally, but for now ask a friend or someone you trust to take a look at your prototype. Ask them and journal about their responses to the following:

- *What are your first impressions of our MVP? Did you find it obvious?*
- *How do you think it addresses our problem statement?*
- *What would you have built differently?*



DAY 25: COMPREHENSION

QUIZ YOURSELF.

DOES IT ALL MAKE SENSE?

1. Which of the following best describes your MVP?
 - *The final product you are bringing to market*
 - *The aspect of your product that is most innovative*
 - *A simple prototype that makes your product idea concrete*
 - *A graphic of your Product-Market Fit*
2. What can developing an MVP help you learn?
 - *The steps required for a customer to use your product*
 - *The cost of resources to build your final product*
 - *The competitive landscape in your market*
 - *The ideal revenue model for your product*
3. Which of the following would be most useful to you, if you are “rapid prototyping”?
 - *A software engineer*
 - *Adobe software*
 - *Pen, paper and Play-Doh*
 - *A design challenge*
4. Why should you ask a friend for feedback on your MVP?
 - *They will give you positive feedback and keep you energized for your venture*
 - *They can share valuable first impressions, ask questions and identify any missing or confusing elements*
 - *They can fix it for you*
 - *They can start selling the product for you*

06

POSITIONING



PHASE 06: POSITIONING



DAY 26: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

THE LANDSCAPE OF YOUR PRODUCT.

Congrats on your product! Now that you've prototyped an actual product to represent your idea, it's much easier to compare what you're doing to potentially similar solutions and competitors.

Reflect and journal on the product you've designed:

- *Who are your direct competitors?*
- *What are some of the broader or indirect competitors that you might have that you aren't currently thinking about?*
- *What trends are you tapping into with your product?*
- *How are you different from these other products in the landscape?*



DAY 27: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

WHAT'S THE BUSINESS LOOK LIKE?

Your product must now be presented to the world in the form of a business, so that it can reach people, and also make money to sustain and grow its impact.

Today, we'll be designing a business model that can position your product for social impact and successful income generation. This activity is inspired by the [Business Model Canvas](#) by Alexander Osterwalder, and the [Models of Impact](#) canvas by verynice. Think about and write down your responses for the 7 topics below:

1. **Product:** Briefly describe your idea.
2. **Value Proposition:** What makes this idea unique? What other complementary or competing products exist, and why are you better?
3. **Customers:** Who are your customers? How do you find your customers? What pain point are you addressing for your customers?
4. **Team:** Who does the work, and how do you find them? What will your team's organization chart need to look like to live up to your impact model and value proposition?
5. **Costs:** How much money do you need to start the business? How much will it cost to be able to provide your customers with the product that you are proposing? What aspects of the product are most expensive? (think about the labor costs, shipping/delivery, and material costs)
6. **Impact:** What kind of impact do you want to make with this idea? How can you measure that impact?
7. **Revenue:** How does your product generate income and sustain itself?



DAY 28: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

BUSINESS PLAN REFLECTION.

Planning is a huge part of the work of creating a business, and every entrepreneur approaches their business plan differently. Reflect and journal about the activity from yesterday:

- *Which of the 7 topics was most challenging for you to consider and respond to?*
- *What made that topic challenging?*
- *How can you learn how to grow your confidence in that topic?*



DAY 29: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

FORGET “BETTER, FASTER, CHEAPER.”

When in the process of attempting to differentiate yourself, it can be tempting to think “why worry about competition if I’m doing something new?” The reality is even products and services in industries completely different than yours are competing for your customer’s time and money, too. Every idea has a competitor.

Avoid leading with “better”, “faster”, or “cheaper.” Instead, remember your problem statement. Think about all the ways your business is able to achieve a solution to that statement.

Brainstorm a list of the adjectives that describe your product’s value proposition. For each adjective, compare how it relates to your business versus how it relates to the competitors you thought of in your Reflection on Day 26. How can you provide that value in your own unique way?



DAY 30: COMPREHENSION

QUIZ YOURSELF.

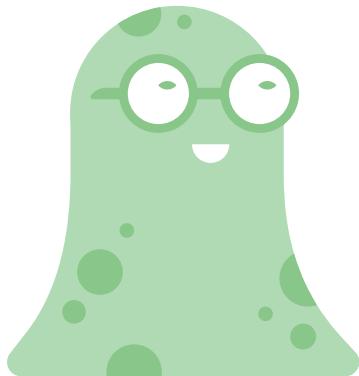
DOES IT ALL MAKE SENSE?

1. In your Business Model, what information should you include under “team”?
 - *How you plan on acquiring customers*
 - *Your organizational chart*
 - *Your resource providers*
 - *Everyone involved, from resource providers to organization members to customers*

2. Which of the following should be included as part of your venture’s costs?
 - *The costs of building, marketing and delivering your product*
 - *Only the costs of building and delivering your product*
 - *Only the costs of building your product*
 - *Only costs incurred after the start-up phase*

3. What is meant by “impact” in your business model?
 - *How your process will influence your team members*
 - *How your revenue model will affect your marketing strategy*
 - *How your product will solve problems and improve lives*
 - *How your leadership style will influence the organization*

4. Why should you forget about “better, faster, cheaper”?
 - *It’s more important to focus on your unique value proposition*
 - *You will never be better, faster or cheaper than the competition*
 - *Customers don’t want products that are faster or cheaper*
 - *That’s just a saying and not a real strategy*



07

VALIDATION



PHASE 07: VALIDATION



DAY 31: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

REFLECT ON SOME OF THE PRODUCTS YOU'VE USED IN THE PAST.

Today, let's take some time to think about other products you admire and products that may frustrate you. Thinking through this will help you stay honest as you validate your own product. Reflect and journal about the following questions:

- *Have you ever used a product that you didn't like?*
 - *What didn't you like about it?*
- *Have you ever used a product that you love?*
 - *What did you love about it?*



DAY 32: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST.

Sometimes when you come up with a great idea, you end up searching for it on Google, and someone else has already done it! Ah! This can be so frustrating, but it is actually a good thing. If someone else has tackled a problem similar to yours, this is actually validating that the problem actually exists, and that there is a market for it. Instead of giving up, do even more research:

- *What is it that makes this existing business either a big success, or a failure?*
- *What does your idea have that this idea does not have?*
- *What other competitors are out there, and how do you compare?*



DAY 33: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

SHOW IT OFF!

On Day 24, we mentioned that it is really important to show your rapid prototype to others. It's true that it can be scary sharing an idea before it is nice and polished looking, but it is super important to remain open to feedback. Today's activity is all about getting feedback.

A very popular approach to collecting feedback that even the largest companies in the world use is called "I like.. I wonder... Next steps". For today, we want to challenge you to share your business—the problem statement, the value proposition, and your prototype—with five people. For each of the five people, ask them to reflect on the following:

- *What do you like about the business?*
- *What do you wonder about the business?*
- *What are some of the next steps you would take to improve the business?*

Once you have done this with five people, compare the answers! For today, we don't want you to worry about creating solutions. Just synthesize. That means to look for the patterns in the feedback. Remember, it is impossible to create something that everyone will like. If you have one person mention a potential flaw in your product that no one else noticed, it might be an anomaly. That said, you should take every bit of feedback that you get very seriously.



DAY 34: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

ITERATING YOUR MVP.

Now that you've taken some time to synthesize the feedback that you've received, it's time for you to make some commitments to action. Reflect and journal about the following questions:

- *What about your business needs to be refined?*
- *What about your business needs to stay the same?*

After reflecting on these questions, take some time to develop a new iteration of your rapid prototype that addresses your answers to these questions.



DAY 35: COMPREHENSION

QUIZ YOURSELF.

DOES IT ALL MAKE SENSE?

1. Why is it useful to reflect on a product you didn't like?
 - *It helps you focus on the customer experience*
 - *It helps you think of new products to replace that one*
 - *It helps you realize that even bad products have market success*
 - *It helps you feel better about your product*
2. Why is it good if someone has already tackled the same problem as you?
 - *It means you can copy their product, rather than going through the long process to create your own*
 - *It means they have validated the problem*
 - *It means you'll have competition, and competition is good*
 - *It means you will definitely make money*
3. How is the "I like.. I wonder.. Next Steps" process useful?
 - *It is a good way to get your team members to share their ideas*
 - *It is a good way to develop a Plan B, in case your business fails*
 - *It is a simple, cost-effective way to get customer feedback on your business*
 - *It is too simple to be useful*
4. What should you do with critical feedback from potential customers?
 - *You should listen but not take it too seriously, since you are the expert*
 - *You should listen and immediately implement any suggestions for improvement*
 - *You should not listen, unless it's clear that customers would not buy the product*
 - *You should listen, synthesize their responses, and decide what you need to change*

08 BRANDING



PHASE 08: BRANDING



DAY 36: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BRAND AS A PERSON?

To dive into the headspace of branding, let's start with a topic you pretty well: yourself! Reflect on and journal about the following questions:

- *What are three words your friends would use to describe you?*
- *What are three words you would describe yourself as?*
- *How do those descriptors relate to your product?*



DAY 37: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BRAND OF YOUR PRODUCT?

Now that you've practiced talking about yourself from different points of view, let's focus on your product. There are many ways for your product to exist in the mind of your audience. Reflect and journal about the following:

- *What does the brand feel like?*
- *What are the emotional qualities of the brand?*
- *How can the unique qualities be brought to life through a single word?*
- *What other brands are out there that inspire you?*
- *How would you describe those brands?*



DAY 38: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

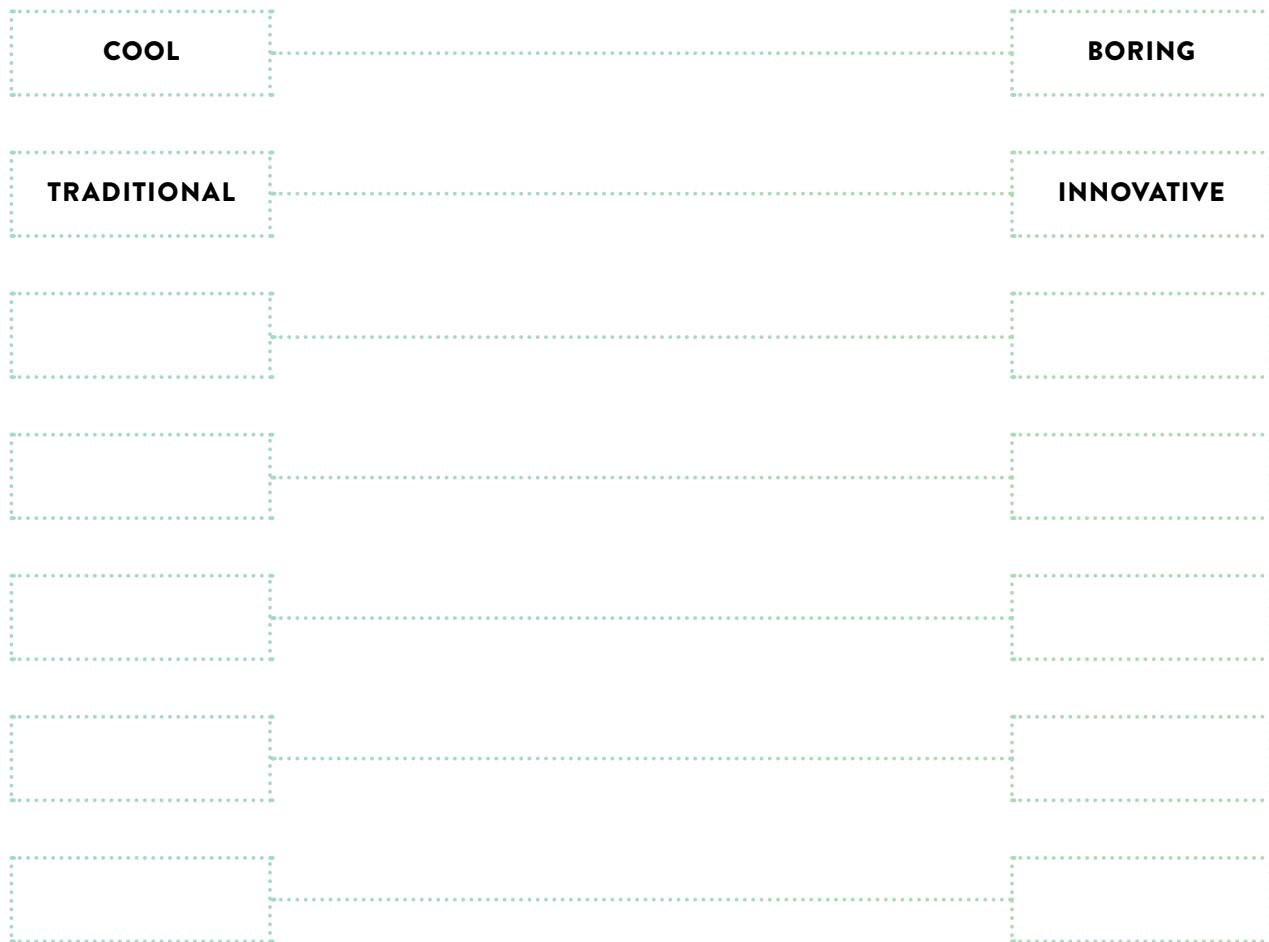
CREATING YOUR BRAND METAPHORS.

Today, we'll be creating brand metaphors. This activity is inspired by the [Give All toolkit series](#) by verynice. To start, set a timer for 5 minutes, and come up with a wide range of keywords that reflect the emotional quality of your brand or that speak to the work your organization does. Try to come up with at least 20 words before the timer runs out. If you're getting stuck on this, remember the questions that you thought through in the first two days of this phase:

- *What does the brand feel like?*
- *What are the emotional qualities of the brand?*
- *How can the unique qualities be brought to life through a single word?*
- *What other brands are out there that inspire you?*
- *How would you describe those brands?*
- *What are three words your friends would use to describe you?*
- *What are three words you would describe yourself as?*
- *How do those descriptors relate to your product?*

Now that you've come up with a list of words, choose your favorite 7-10. For each of these, come up with a word for each that is related, complimentary, and/or conflicting. For example, "traditional" vs. "innovative", or "boring" vs. "cool".

Now that you have 7-10 sets of words, use our Key Terms Abacus (below) to plot them. Then, with a pen, please mark the place you would like to position your organization. For example, between “cool” and “boring”, you are obviously “cool”. This can also be less binary. For example, your organization may be both “traditional” AND “innovative”, but your branding may lean more toward one or the other.



Next, review all of the unique words you've come up with so far, and select 3-5 that you feel best represent your organization. These will be your “Brand Metaphors”. A brand metaphor is a keyword that indicates the personality and “vibe” of your brand. For each metaphor, provide a visual, a title, and a brief description. This will help you communicate your brand to others.

For example, if you select “innovative” as a metaphor, you might draw or select a picture of something that visually explains what you mean by “innovative”, while also writing a brief description of why your organization is “innovative”.

DAY 39: PRACTICE EXERCISE TRY IT OUT.



FIND THE PATTERNS.

Another important aspect of defining your identity is to see how you can stand out from the crowd. Collect as many examples of imagery, designs, and messages as you can from your competitors, and look for patterns. How are key segments in this industry representing themselves? What are the trends between segments, and how do they relate? How do they misalign?



DAY 40: COMPREHENSION

QUIZ YOURSELF.

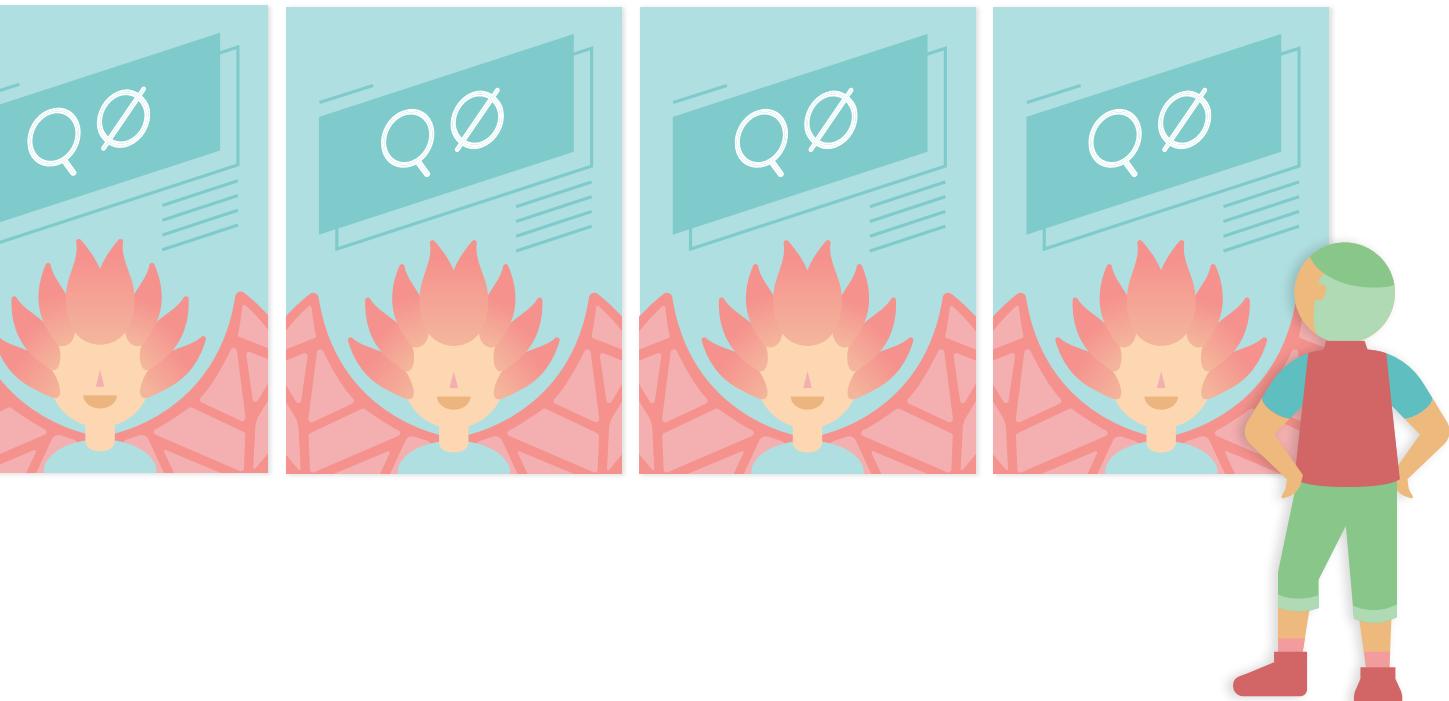
DOES IT ALL MAKE SENSE?

1. What is meant by “emotional qualities” of a brand?
 - *The kinds of goods offered by a brand*
 - *The way a team develops a brand*
 - *The way a brand makes you feel*
 - *The literal meaning of the brand name*

2. Which of the following can be “keywords” for developing your brand?
 - *Words your friends use to describe you*
 - *Unique qualities of your product*
 - *Words you use to describe yourself*
 - *All of the above*

3. A pairing of words on the keyword abacus could be “retro” v. _____?
 - *Old-fashioned*
 - *Modern*
 - *Trendy*
 - *Barebones*

4. When you are developing a brand, how should you consider your competition?
 - *You should try to look at much like them as possible*
 - *You should pay no attention to them, so thoughts of their brand won’t creep into your ideas*
 - *You should look for patterns and see how you can blend into the market*
 - *You should for patterns and see how you will stand out from the crowd*



09

STORYTELLING



PHASE 09: STORYTELLING



DAY 41: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

WHAT KIND OF STORYTELLING DO YOU LIKE?

Books, movies, video games, and social media all have one thing in common: storytelling. Reflect on your favorite stories:

- *Think back to the last 3 books you've enjoyed. What did you like about them?*
- *Now think about the last 3 movies you've watched. What did you like about them?*
- *What are the similar qualities between all these stories? Why do you like those stories?*
- *What is the best story you've ever heard? What made that story so great?*



DAY 42: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

MAKING TOAST.

Today, we'll be creating a rough draft of a pitch deck! When it comes to pitching an idea, faculty at the [USC Lovine and Young Academy](#) have developed an amazing method known as "TOAST". The best part? It only requires five slides. Create one slide for each of the following sections. Remember not to include too much text!

- **Transparency:** *What is the problem you've identified? Whose problem is it? Why are you or your team the right person/people to take on this project?*
- **Opportunity:** *What is your idea, and how does this relate to the problem you've identified? What is the nature of your artifact?*
- **Analysis:** *What else is out there, also dealing with this problem? How is your idea different?*
- **Strategy:** *What would be your first/next steps in tackling this project? What resources will you require to fulfill the needs of this project, and how will you acquire those?*
- **Transformation:** *What does success look like for this project? What will the world look like in 10 years, because of this project?*

Once you've created your five slides, it's time for the ultimate challenge: presenting your idea to a group of people! Maybe it is your class, your co-workers, or your family. Find a way to share your idea with a room full of at least 5 people. After sharing your idea, take the feedback to heart, and begin thinking about how you can further develop your concept and make it even more successful.



DAY 43: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

PRACTICE WITH OUTLINES.

It's tempting to write a perfect script, memorize it, and practice over and over again. But the problem with this is that it can actually make you even more nervous AND come across as a bit inauthentic. This is because, when you memorize something, you are forcing yourself to be absolutely perfect and hit every word and note that you planned for. So, if you even mess up on one word, you'll feel like you failed!

- *Write an outline instead. List the key points that you want to get across. For each of your slides, have 1-2 key points that you're trying to get across. Feel free to write those down on flashcards. Now, as long as you hit those key points, you can trust yourself to communicate those in any way you'd like.*



DAY 44: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

WHAT'S YOUR SUCCESS STORY?

Making TOAST and pitching your product to people is a huge milestone on your entrepreneurial path. Now that you've gotten this far, take a moment to think about where you're going. Reflect on and journal about the following questions:

- *How do you define success?*
- *How will you measure your success?*
- *How will you celebrate your achievements?*
- *How will you overcome the challenging times?*



DAY 45: COMPREHENSION

QUIZ YOURSELF.

DOES IT ALL MAKE SENSE?

1. Why reflect on your favorite books and movies at this stage?
 - *It's an effective team-building exercise and mental break*
 - *It helps you think about what makes stories effective*
 - *It give you ideas for characters or celebrities who could feature in your marketing campaign*
 - *It will help you generate new product ideas*
2. What does the acronym TOAST stand for?
 - *Transparency, Opportunity, Analysis, Strategy, Transformation*
 - *Team, Opportunity Cost, Activation, Strategy, Transition*
 - *Transformation, Openness, Analysis, Synthesis, Transition*
 - *Timing, Opportunity, Access, Synthesis, Transformation*
3. What does "transparency" mean in your pitch deck?
 - *Truthfulness about startup costs and risks*
 - *Clarity about the problem, the customer and your team*
 - *Thorough analysis of the competitive landscape*
 - *Clarity about your MVP and how it works*
4. What is an effective way to prepare your pitch?
 - *Put your notes on the slide deck, and read from them*
 - *Write out a script and memorize it*
 - *Create an outline, and memorize 1-2 key points to go with each slide*
 - *Don't prepare -- you know your stuff and will know what to say in the moment*

10 FUTURE VISION



PHASE 10: FUTURE VISION



DAY 46: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE FUTURES?

The futurist Jim Dator created the Alternative Futures Method to remind us that there are many possible futures. When considering the future of your project, be sure to take the time to picture both the positive AND negative outcomes so that you don't get blindsided by the future! Here's a helpful way to start doing that.

1. Think about the business that you have developed. Imagine that it grows, and sees continued success. Write a quick story about what that might feel like.
2. Now, imagine that things don't go so well. It's sad to think about, but important to plan for. What are the things that might not go well, and what might that feel like? What can you do to try and avoid those challenges?



DAY 47: PRACTICE EXERCISE

TRY IT OUT.

SEEING YOUR BUSINESS IN THE FUTURE.

There's something quite inconvenient about the future, and that is the fact that it doesn't exist. We can only ever be in the present. As a result, the future is just a symbol for the repercussions of our daily actions. The choices we're making right now are playing an active role in determining what happens next. While you can't predict the future, there are a few things that you can do to invent it. One of those things is to track trends and emerging issues.

- **Track Trends.** *Keep track of the trends and emerging issues that interest you. Every day, week, or month, contribute to a blog or diary in which you capture these new points of influence, or signals of change to come. Keep your eye on those things as they evolve, and always ask yourself: how might this impact my business?*



DAY 48: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

NEWS HEADLINE.

It's 10 years into the future, and the scenario you've imagined has worked out well for you and your business. Write a news headline that represents the success of your organization or project.

This thought prompt is called "Picture Success", and is from the [TIME MACHINE](#) toolkit by verynice.



DAY 49: TOOLKIT ACTIVITY

FOLLOW ALONG.

TRAVELING TIME

Take a look at the news headline that you wrote yesterday. Guess what? You've just stepped into a time machine, and now you are 10 years in the future! To travel back to the present, we need you to create a timeline that starts at the desired future state and brings it back home to the present day. Your timeline must include 5 milestones, including the final milestone, which will feature the newspaper headline that you wrote in the previous exercise.

Today

Newspaper
Headline

Congratulations! You've just traveled time, and now we're back in the present. Be sure to take the lessons you've learned from the future, and begin applying them today. Remember, the future is just a symbol for the implications of what we are doing right now. Start realizing those futures, today. The activities from Day 47 and 48 are inspired by [TIME MACHINE](#), a toolkit by verynice.



DAY 50: REFLECTION

REFLECT AND JOURNAL.

WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?

Congratulations! You've just spent 50 days walking the journey of an entrepreneur. You started bringing a vision for the future to life, and you've learned a lot—and perhaps have run into some surprises—along the way.

As an entrepreneur, you wake up and decide every day whether or not to keep walking: the journey continues after the “happily ever after!”. Now that we've reached the end of our toolkit, it's a good time to look back on all the distance you've walked.

- *What have you learned about your work habits?*
- *What have you learned about your passions and interests?*
- *What are your strengths and weaknesses, from your point of view now?*
- *Would you do this again? If so, what would you do differently?*



Finally, let's jump ahead. Pretend now you are 20 years in the future. What are you up to now?

- *What do you do professionally?*
- *What is something you're really good at?*
- *What is something you've stopped doing?*
- *What kind of people are you hanging out with?*



ANSWERS

PHASE 02, DAY 10:

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. C

PHASE 04, DAY 20:

1. D
2. C
3. B
4. A

PHASE 05, DAY 25:

1. C
2. A
3. C
4. B

PHASE 06, DAY 30:

1. B
2. A
3. C
4. A

PHASE 07, DAY 35:

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D

PHASE 08, DAY 40:

1. C
2. D
3. B
4. D

PHASE 09, DAY 45:

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. C

PHASE 06, DAY 30:

1. B
2. A
3. C
4. A